

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 LUSAKA 00215 01 OF 02 271045Z

12

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W

----- 045871

R 261215Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2720

INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 LUSAKA 0215

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

CAPETOWN FOR EMBASSY

EO 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, MILI, AO, US, ZA

SUBJECT: STAFFDEL COUGHLIN MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER BANDA

1. SUMMARY: IN MEETING WITH FONMIN BANDA JAN 25, STAFFDEL COUGHLIN BRIEFED HIM ON PURPOSE OF HIS TRIP ON BEHALF SENATOR TUNNEY AND ON HIS OBSERVATIONS DURING 24-HOUR VISIT TO SILVA PORTO AND LOBITO FROM WHICH COUGHLIN HAD JUST RETURNED. BANDA EXHIBITED CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN LATEST NEWS OF MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH AND EXPRESSED PESSIMISM THAT WESTERN AID TO SAVIMBI WILL BE FORTHCOMING IN SUFFICIENT QUANTITIES IN TIME TO PREVENT COLLAPSE OF UNITA FRONT. BANDA ALSO WORRIED ABOUT ZAIRE WHICH HE FEELS WILL BE NEXT SOVIET/CUBAN TARGET. IF ZAIRE GOES, ZAMBIA WILL BE SUBJECT SEVERE AND IRRESISTABLE PRESSURES. BANDA REAFFIRMED ZAMBIA WILL NOT PARTICIPATE WITH ZAIRE IN JOINT APPROACH TO USG ON ANGOLA BUT ASSURED COUGHLIN HE READY COME TO WASHINGTON TO GIVE SECRETARY OF STATE AND CONGRESS BENEFIT ZAMBIAN VIEWS ON NEED FOR URGENT US MILITARY SUPPLY TO SAVIMBI. END SUMMARY.

2. BY PRIOR ARRANGEMENT FONMIN BANDA CAME BY MY RESIDENCE

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PAGE 02 LUSAKA 00215 01 OF 02 271045Z

EVENING OF JAN 25 TO SEE STAFFDEL COUGHLIN. COUGHLIN HAD RETURNED

LESS THAN HOUR BEFORE FROM ANGOLA WHERE HE HAD FLOWN PREVIOUS DAY TO SEE UNITA LEADER SAVIMBI AND ACCOMPANY HIM TO LOBITO. FONMIN COMPLAINED HE RARELY HAD OPPORTUNITY INTERVIEW TRAVELERS FROM ANGOLA AND EAGERLY QUESTIONED COUGHLIN ABOUT BOTH MILITARY SITUATION AND DEGREE OF POLITICAL ORGANIZATION EXISTING IN UNITA CONTROLLED DISTRICTS.

3. COUGHLIN SAID THAT UNITA MILITARY SITUATION WAS NOT VERY ENCOURAGING. SOUTH AFRICANS PULLED OUT ENTIRELY FROM HUAMBO ON JAN 23 TAKING ALL OF THEIR EQUIPMENT AND LEAVING ONLY THEIR FUEL BEHIND. UNITA FORCES LACK WEAPONS COMPARABLE TO TANKS, 122 MM ROCKETS, HELICOPTER GUNSHIPS, AND NOW JET AIRCRAFT AT DISPOSAL OF CUBANS/MPLA FORCES. COUGHLIN SAID UNITA STILL FLYING SUPPLIES INTO HUAMBO BUT NOT VISITORS OR OTHER PERSONNEL FOR FEAR AIR ATTACKS ON THAT TOWN BY ENEMY. UNITA STILL HOLDS LUSO BUT HAS EVACUATED CELA AND FORMED DEFENSIVE LINE SOUTH OF TOWN. (NOTE: ZAMBIAN PRESS SUNDAY REPORTED MPLA CLAIMS TO HAVE BREACHED THAT LINE AND TO HAVE CROSSED QUEVA RIVER, WITH ATTACKING COLUMN NOW ONLY 99 KM FROM UNITA HEADQUARTERS AT HUAMBO.) SAVIMBI WAS OPTIMISTIC HIS FORCES COULD HOLD THESE LINES ANOTHER FEW WEEKS. COUGHLIN, WHO HAS COVERED WARS IN VIETNAM AND BANGLADESH AS JOURNALIST WAS LESS CONFIDENT HE COULD DO SO WITHOUT IMMEDIATE INFUSION BETTER WEAPONRY. THIS WAS ALSO OPINION OF SEVERAL PORTUGUESE WITH WHOM COUGHLIN SPOKE IN HUAMBO. AS FOR UNITA POLITICAL ORGANIZATION, COUGHLIN SAID HE IMPRESSED WITH SEEMINGLY GENUINE POPULARITY OF SAVIMBI AND LATTER'S LEADERSHIP QUALITIES BUT NOTED THAT UNITA STILL SEEMS TO BE REGARDED BY LOCAL POPULACE MORE AS MILITARY MOVEMENT THAN AS GOVERNMENT. HE HAD OBSERVED THAT UNITA'S PRIME MINISTER, N'DELE, SEEMED TO BE UNKNOWN TO AND UNRECOGNIZED BY PEOPLE AND UNITA TROOPS ALIKE.

4. FONMIN THEN ENUMERATED VARIOUS REASONS WHY ZAMBIA SYMPATHETIC TO SAVIMBI: HIS SUPPORT AMONG LARGE PROPORTION IF NOT MAJORITY OF POPULATION; HIS QUALITIES OF LEADERSHIP; HIS SENSE OF MAGNANIMITY AND WILLINGNESS TO COMPROMISE; AND THE FEAR THAT NETO, IF VICTORIOUS, WOULD REMAIN SUBSERVIENT TO SOVIETS AND CUBANS AND BE UNABLE ACT INDEPENDENTLY. AT LATER POINT IN CONVERSATION HE EXPRESSED

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PAGE 03 LUSAKA 00215 01 OF 02 271045Z

CONCERN OVER CUBAN "RACIST PLAN" TO SEND LARGE NUMBERS OF BLACK CUBANS TO ANGOLA, ENCOURAGE THEM TO INTERMARRY WITH NATIVE ANGOLANS, AND TURN COUNTRY INTO VIRTUAL CUBAN COLONY IN AFRICA.

5. BANDA SAID HE PESSIMISTIC ABOUT UNITA'S POWER TO RESIST, NOT BECAUSE OF DOUBTS ABOUT SAVIMBI'S DETERMINATION BUT BECAUSE OUTSIDE SUPPORT WILL NOT ARRIVE IN TIME TO PREVENT HIS

MILITARY DEFEAT. AT ONE POINT BANDA SAID EMPHATICALLY THAT ONE CAN NO LONGER TALK IN TERMS OF WEEKS OR EVEN OF DAYS BUT NOW OF HOURS. TIME IS GROWING TOO SHORT. HE WAS WORRIED THAT EVEN IF THE US CONGRESS EVENTUALLY AGREES TO AUTHORIZE RESUMPTION OF AID TO FNLA/UNITA, TIME LOST IN HEARINGS AND DEBATE WILL MEAN HELP COULD ARRIVE TOO LATE.

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PAGE 01 LUSAKA 00215 02 OF 02 261614Z

45

ACTION SS-25

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R 261215Z JAN 76  
FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2721  
INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA  
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA  
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 LUSAKA 0215

EXDIS

CAPETOWN FOR EMBASSY

6. AS HE HAD WITH ME DAY BEFORE, FONMIN THEN REVIEWED HIS FEARS THAT ZAIRE WILL BE NEXT TARGET OF SOVIET/CUBAN AGGRESSION, IN PART BECAUSE OF ZAIRE'S CLOSE CONNECTIONS WITH U.S. BUT ALSO BECAUSE MOBUTU'S HOLD ON COUNTRY NEITHER EASY NOR POPULAR, AND COUNTRY'S POOR COMMUNICATIONS MAKE IT PRONE TO ATTACK, USING SOME 6,000 EX-KATANGA GENDARMES NOW ON MPLA PAYROLL. ALSO, WITH TRANSPORT ROUTE TO SHABA PROVINCE NOW CLOSED, ZAIRE THREATENED WITH ECONOMIC COLLAPSE AND POTENTIAL DISINTEGRATION INTO AUTONOMOUS PROVINCES AS IN EARLY SIXTIES. THEN IT WOULD BE ZAMBIA'S TURN TO BE HEMMED IN, WITH ROUTES TO SEA UNDER CONTROL OF PRO-SOVIET CLIENTS. ASSUMING ZIMBABWE CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUE NOT SOON RESOLVED, ZAMBIANS WOULD BE FACED WITH ECONOMIC SQUEEZE. EITHER ZAMBIA WOULD FALL "LIKE RIPE PLUM" INTO SOVIET ORBIT OR IT WOULD BE COMPELLED REOPEN RHODESIAN BORDER, ACTION WHICH SOVIETS WOULD THEN USE TO ATTACK ZAMBIA PSYCHOLOGICALLY FOR GOING BACK ON ITS PRINCIPLES. IN THIS CONTEXT BANDA MENTIONED APPROACH TO HIM

DURING OAU SUMMIT BY SOVIET EMBASSY ADDIS COUNSELOR, WHOM BANDA FIRST MET MANY YEARS AGO AND WHOM HE BELIEVES TO BE KGB OFFICER. LATTER HAD UNSUCCESSFULLY SOUGHT PERSUADE ZAMBIA TO COME OVER TO MPLA SIDE; FAILING IN THAT, RUSSIAN HAD WARNED BANDA THAT SOVIETS ALREADY HAD ORGANIZATION OF THEIR SUPPORTERS INSIDE ZAIRE AND WOULD HAVE SIMILAR ORGANIZATIONS INSIDE ZAMBIA

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PAGE 02 LUSAKA 00215 02 OF 02 261614Z

AND OTHER COUNTRIES AS WELL.

7. ASKED BY COUGHLIN ABOUT PROPOSAL MENTIONED TO HIM IN KINSHASA OF JOINT AFRICAN FONMIN'S MISSION TO WASHINGTON, BANDA ACKNOWLEDGED THIS IDEA CONVEYED TO ZAMBIANS BY NGUDZA KARL I BOND. SAID ZAMBIANS HAD ENCOURAGED ZAIRE TO GO AHEAD BUT COUNT ZAMBIANS OUT. BANDA EXPLAINED ZAMBIA AND ZAIRE POSITIONS NOT ENTIRELY COINCIDENT WHICH IS WHY ZAMBIANS WISH ACT INDEPENDENTLY OF ZAIRE IN APPROACHING US. ADDED THAT HE, BANDA, IS READY COME TO WASHINGTON IMMEDIATELY IF INVITED BY SECRETARY KISSINGER OR BY TUNNEY OR OTHER SENATORS TO GIVE ZAMBIAN VIEWS. TO COUGHLIN QUERY WHETHER ZAMBIANS WOULD BE PREPARED SPEAK OUT IN WASHINGTON IN FAVOR OF US MILITARY AID TO ANTI-COMMUNIST ANGOLANS, BANDA REPLIED IN AFFIRMATIVE.

8. COMMENT: I FOUND BANDA BETTER ORGANIZED, MORE THOUGHTFUL, AND MUCH MORE OPEN IN THIS CONVERSATION THAN HE HAD BEEN WITH ME PREVIOUS NIGHT. HE HAD OBVIOUSLY HAD TIME AFTER MEETING WITH ZAIRE'S NGUDZA TO DIGEST, ASSIMILATE AND MAKE DISTINCTIONS, ALSO TO COMPARE NOTES WITH OTHER SENIOR ZAMBIAN ADVISORS. HIS ARGUMENTS FOR URGENT US ACTION ON SAVIMBI'S BEHALF WERE MORE COHERENT AND PERSUASIVE. IT EVIDENT FROM HIS REACTION TO COUGHLIN'S DISCOURAGING PICTURE OF MILITARY SITUATION AND OUTLINE OF TIME-CONSUMING CONGRESSIONAL PROCEDURES, FONMIN'S OWN PESSIMISM DEEPENED OVER CONCERN THAT WEST CAN ACT IN TIME TO ENABLE SAVIMBI TO WITHSTAND MPLA/CUBAN ADVANCE. HOWEVER, HE APPEARED TAKE SOME CONSOLATION FROM COUGHLIN EXPLANATION OF REASONS WHY TUNNEY AMENDMENT ADOPTED IN FIRST PLACE AND FROM STAFFDEL'S PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS THAT SENATORS TUNNEY, KENNEDY, AND OTHERS HAVE STILL OPEN MIND TO ADMINISTRATION REQUEST FOR AID TO ANGOLANS SO LONG AS IT OVERTLY GIVEN AND NO US PERSONNEL INVOLVED. CONVERSATION WITH COUGHLIN, WHILE IT HAD ITS GLOOMY SIDE, HAS THEREFORE PROBABLY SERVED STRENGTHEN BANDA BELIEF THAT ZAMBIAN DIRECT APPROACH IN WASHINGTON TO KEY MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AS WELL AS TO SECRETARY WOULD BE BOTH WELCOMED AND WORTHWHILE.

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